The Destruction Of Sodom.

The warning was spoken; the righteous had gone;
And the proud ones of Sodom were feasting alone;
All gay was the banquet, the revel was long,
With the pouring of wine and the breathing of song.

'Twas an evening of beauty; the air was perfume,
The earth was all greenness, the trees were all bloom;
And softly the delicate viol was heard,
Like the murmur of love or the notes of a bird.

And beautiful maidens moved down in the dance,
With the magic of motion and sunshine of glance;
And white arms wreathed lightly, and tresses fell free,
As the plumage of bird in some tropical tree.

Where the shrines of foul idols were lighted on high,
And wantonness tempted the lust of the eye;
'Midst rites of obsceneness, strange, loathsome, abhorred,
The blasphemer scoffed at the name of the Lord.

Hark! the growl of the thunder, the quaking of earth!
Woe, woe to the worship, and woe to the mirth!
The black sky has opened—there is flame in the air—
The red arm of vengeance is lifted and bare!

Then the shriek of the dying rose wild where the song
And the low tone of love had been whispered along;
For the fierce flames went lightly o'er palace and bower,
Like the red tongues of demons, to blast and devour!

Down, down on the fallen the red ruin rained,
And the reveler sank with his wine-cup undrained;
The foot of the dancer, the music's loved thrill,
And the shout and the laughter grew suddenly still.

The last throb of anguish was fearfully given;
The last eye glared forth in its madness on Heaven!
The last groan of horror rose wildly and vain,
And death brooded over the Pride of the plain.

—*John G. Whittier.*

The All Prevailing Love.

Love is the highest sentiment, or quatlity of character to be found in men and angels. God himself has no higher. Love actuated him to lift up an eye of rescue and an arm to save when mankind was foul with sin and floundering in iniquity.

In the human mind love or benevolence sits upon the throne of the character and where it is allowed to rule as it should there is heart-philanthropy going out therefrom that brightens the whole life of the possessor, and to surrounding people, it is as the sun to the earth. The warmth of the sun gives life to the vegetation of the earth and congeniality to living creatures thereon and its power never grows less. So is a loving heart. Its rays of beauty go out in all directions and all who come within the range of its influence feel the pleasing effects, and only the unchangeable rock in human form are unaffected thereby.

Love is exalted upon the highest throne by the Good Shepherd, who gave his life for the sheep. "A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another, as I have loved you." This commandment is the power and beauty of all commandments. Where this is obeyed there is no occasion for any other. "As I have loved you gives it wonderful breadth. Christ so loved his disciples and brethren that he gave his life, his all for them. He gave up his pleasure and perfect happiness with the Father, the association of eternal courts, the music that is beyond the reach of the mortal tongue in imitation, the royal robes of the eternal city that he might lead into the same lovely habitation the dwellers of the earth. To do this he had to forsake all and take upon himself the coarse and painful robe of flesh and render himself subject to the pains, sorrow and suffering which belong to it. He did all this at the dictate of all prevailing love. How appropriate it was for him to say to his disciples, "As I have loved you."

Love is also crowned as queen by John, the beloved disciple. He spoke from what he knew and what he practiced. To him love was the fulfilling of the law, and he judged the one who hated his brother as a murderer. Hating is the enemy of love. It does not belong to God and it cannot exist where God is. No one can enter the heavenly portals with a hating heart. It is the greatest sin to hate a brother. As love is queen of virtues, so hate is king of crimes, and the heart over which it rules is a fountain of poisonous influences and bitterness.

The Apostle Paul makes love the greatest of great things. "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, but the greatest of these is charity." It is greatest because without it all is nothing. Without it there is no use attempting to reach heaven. Men may do wonderful deeds, sacrifice their all and yet if they have not charity, their labors will do them no service in rendering them happy in the world to come. It is impossible to be saved without it, because the connection is broken between earth and heaven. There is an impenetrable barrier in the way, and there is no power that will raise the traveler over it except love. Love only drew or sent God to the earth through our Savior, and love only can draw us to heaven. His is the line of communication without it there is no attraction between men's hearts and God, and there can be no salvation. Love is a boundless sea upon which Faith and Hope can sail to the joys beyond. But if they are not on this sea they will land at the pit of destruction.

The new commandment should be every Christians motto. Constant looking upon it will inspire the mind with sanctifying thought and fill the soul with the water that proceeds from the throne of God. This is the commandment that should be elevated above all others by the believer, as God has so elevated it; and his constant endeavor should be to live it out in daily life.

G.

Acts 2: 38.

"*Repent*"—The word repentance means simply—change of mind, the reversal of a man's controlling thoughts, feelings and aims of life. Sorrow forms no part of the meaning. But sorrow is involved in and precedes it. Repentance, then, is the turning of the whole soul from self to God, and involves the breaking off from a selfish, sinful course of life, and the entrance upon a life of obedience, trust and supreme devotion to God.

"*And be baptized*"—The additional outward requirement of baptism was designed as an expression of their faith in Jesus as Messiah and Savior, and their open consecration to his service. On God's part it is his seal of acceptance and of his fulfillment of all the promises included in the covenant of grace.

"*Every one of you*"—There are no exceptions. It is Christ's command that whosoever believed in him should publicly profess their faith by baptism. A faith that is not willing to confess the Lord is not strong enough or true enough to save the soul.

Baptism is, (1) a confession of Christ; (2) a symbol of the washing away of sin; (3) a symbol of the purified, risen life: (4) a symbol of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

It was enjoined by Christ, Matt. 28: 19. And while there, the baptism is to be in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and here it is only said "in the name of Jesus Christ," we are not to suppose any change made from the first ordinance; but only that as the church was to be called Christ's, so in mentioning the sacrament for the admission of its members, his name was specially made prominent. It was belief in Christ as the son of God, which constituted the ground of admission to the privilege of his church—*Bible Reader's Com.*

This is just the way I think and truly believe.

DANIEL BEACHLER.

Miamisburg, O.

The Office of Wisdom.

It belongs to wisdom to determine when to act, and when to cease—when to reveal, and when to conceal a matter—when to speak, and when to keep silence—when to give, and when to receive; in short, to regulate the measure of all things, as well as to determine the end, and provide the means of obtaining the end pursued in every deliberate course of action. Every particular faculty or skill, besides, needs to derive direction from this; they are all quite incapable of directing themselves. The art of navigation, for instance, will teach us to steer a ship across the ocean but, it will never teach us on what occasions it is proper to take a voyage. The art of war will instruct us how to marshal an army or to fight a battle to the greatest advantage, but you must learn from a higher school when it is fitting, just and proper, to wage war or to make peace. The art of husbandry is to sow and bring to maturity the precious fruits of the earth; it belongs to another skill to regulate their consumption, by a regard to our health, fortune, and other circumstances. In short, there is no faculty we can exert, no species of skill we can apply, but requires a superintending hand—but looks up, as it were, to some higher principle, as a maid to her mistress for direction, and this universal superintendent is Wisdom.

Every other quality is subordinate and inferior to wisdom, in the same sense as the mason who lays the bricks and stones in a building is inferior to the architect who drew the plan and superintends the work. The former executes only what the latter contrives and directs. Now, it is the prerogative of wisdom to preside over every inferior principle, to regulate the exercise of every power, and limit the indulgence of every appetite, as shall best conduce to one great end. It being the providence of wisdom to preside, it sits as umpire on every difficulty, and so gives the final direction and control to all the powers of our nature. Hence it is entitled to be considered as the summit of perfection.

ROBERT HALL.

Little boats always totter about on the surface of the water, going all ways, as it happens, and overturning in a breath, while the great ship sinks deeply and more deeply in and goes steadily on. The cause of its steadiness is its depth. So abiding in the great truths of God gives steadfastness of motion to the soul. Under all the pressure of error and unbelief and false doctrines, it is unmovable, abounding in the work of the Lord. It is not "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lay in wait to deceive."—Eph. 4: 14. It is a great thing to take the truth and hold to it. It is a great thing to know error and let it alone. Holding on to the fundamentals of truth and seeking God's help, the soul is sure to come into the light. Everything by turns and nothing long, what growth—what progress can be hoped for?—*Dr. Goodell.*

Sorrow is divine. Sorrow is reigning on all the thrones of the universe, and the crown of all crowns has been one of thorns. There has been books that treat of the sympathy of sorrow, but only one that bids us glory in tribulation, and count it all joy when we fall into divers afflictions, that so we may be associated with that great fellowship of suffering of which the incarnate Son of God is the head, and through which he is carrying a redemptive conflict to a glorious victory over evil. If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.—*Harriet Beecher Stowe.*

Believe in God's love, and you, like many another wounded soldier, shall yet win the battle. To say, "I cannot" in matters of daily duty is weak and feeble; to say it of spiritual duties is blasphemy, for it charges God with sins which you pretend to be unavoidable; it is death, because it is the inevitable prelude to self-abandonment and to despair.—*F. W. Farrar.*

Think not thou canst sigh a sigh,
And thy Maker is not nigh;
Think not thou canst weep a tear,
And thy Maker is not near.

—*William Blake.*

Cæsar or nothing! Brother, say not so;
By such mad speech thou dost thy spirit wrong;
Such words are not for thee, who art too strong,
Manly and true to let thy soul sink low,
Missing the highest. There is little woe
For every son of man who turns his back
On his ideal; therefore, through the track
Lead to no regal goal, still onward go.
Not thine to fix how high thy state shall be,
Not thine perchance to feel the Cæsar crown
Clasping thine unturned brow; thou ne'er may'st see
The purple from thy shoulders falling down;
But it is thine to live right royally,
King of thyself, and gain a king's renown.

—*James Ashcroft Noble.*